

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 /031 W

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R 281649Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5021

S E C R E T ROME 7280

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IT, US

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT LEONE DINES AT RESIDENCE

DEPT. PASS ALSO WHITE HOUSE

1. PRESIDENT LEONE TOGETHER WITH HIS WIFE AND ONE OF HIS SONS CAME TO THE RESIDENCE FOR DINNER WITH ME ON MAY 27. HIS PRESENCE IS UNPRECEDENTED. MRS. LEONE TOLD MY WIFE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC HAS EVER DINED IN A FOREIGN EMBASSY. THE PRESIDENT TOLD ME HE HAD ACCEPTED TO SHOW HIS DEEP RESPECT FOR THE UNITED STATES.

2. PRESIDENT LEONE ASKED ME TO EXTEND HIS WARMEST REGARDS TO THE PRESIDENT. HE ALSO ASKED ME TO INFORM THE SECRETARY THAT HE WANTS VERY MUCH TO SEE HIM AND HOPES THAT HE WILL STOP IN ROME AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.

3. THE ITALIAN PRESIDENT TOLD ME THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS THE MOST SERIOUS AND PREOCCUPYING. HE IS DEEPLY CONCERNED OVER THE FINANCIAL SITUATION. HE SAID THAT HARD TIMES ARE AHEAD FOR ITALY UNLESS COURAGEOUS AND POSITIVE MEASURES ARE TAKEN SOON. HE AGREED WITH MY OBSERVATION THAT PRIME MINISTER RUMOR SEEMED TO BE TAKING A FIRMER LINE SINCE THE REFERENDUM.

4. WE DISCUSSED POLITCAL MATTERS IN A VERY GENERAL WAY. PRESIDENT LEONE SAID THAT HE HAD WANTED TO AVOID THE
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REFERENDUM AND THAT IT HAD NOT TURNED OUT THE WAY HE WANTED

IT. HE STRESSED TO ME THE NEED FOR DC PARTY UNITY. THIS
IS NO TIME FOR SQUABBLING AND THE PARTY CANNOT AFFORD IN-
TERNAL BATTLES. IT WAS CLEAR HOWEVER THAT THE ECONOMIC
SITUATION IS THE PROBLEM HE FINDS MOST WORRYING.VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, REFERENDUMS, ECONOMIC ESTIMATES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME07280
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740133-1079
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740514/aaaaaltw.tel
Line Count: 65
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT LEONE DINES AT RESIDENCE DEPT. PASS ALSO WHITE HOUSE
TAGS: PFOR, IT, US, (LEONE, GIOVANNI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005